United Nations A/C.2/72/L.31

General Assembly

Distr.: Limited
18 October 2017

Original: English

Seventy-second session
Second Committee
Agenda item 22 (a)
Groups of countries in special situations: Follow-up to the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries

Ecuador:* draft resolution

Follow-up to the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries

The General Assembly,

Recalling the Istanbul Declaration[1] and the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020,[2] adopted at the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, held in Istanbul, Turkey, from 9 to 13 May 2011, and endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 65/280 of 17 June 2011, in which the Assembly called upon all the relevant stakeholders to commit to implementing the Istanbul Programme of Action,

Recalling also the Political Declaration adopted by the Comprehensive High-level Midterm Review of the Implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020, held in Antalya, Turkey, from 27 to 29 May 2016, and endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 70/294 of 25 July 2016, in which the Assembly called upon all the relevant stakeholders to commit to implementing the Declaration,

Reaffirming the overarching goal of the Istanbul Programme of Action of overcoming the structural challenges faced by the least developed countries to eradicate poverty, achieve the internationally agreed development goals and enable graduation from the least developed country category,

Reaffirming also its resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015, entitled "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", in which it adopted a comprehensive, far-reaching and people-centred set of universal and

* On behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China.

[1] *Report of the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, Istanbul, Turkey, 9-13 May 2011* (A/CONF.219/7), chap. I.

[2] Ibid., chap. II.

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transformative Sustainable Development Goals and targets, its commitment to working tirelessly for the full implementation of the Agenda by 2030, its recognition that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development, its commitment to achieving sustainable development in its three dimensions — economic, social and environmental — in a balanced and integrated manner, and to building upon the achievements of the Millennium Development Goals and seeking to address their unfinished business,

Reaffirming further its resolution 69/313 of 27 July 2015 on the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, which is an integral part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, supports and complements it, helps to contextualize its means of implementation targets with concrete policies and actions, and reaffirms the strong political commitment to address the challenge of financing and creating an enabling environment at all levels for sustainable development in the spirit of global partnership and solidarity,

Welcoming the Paris Agreement,[3] adopted under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and its early entry into force, encouraging all its parties to fully implement the Agreement, and parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change[4] that have not yet done so to deposit their instruments of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession, where appropriate, as soon as possible,

Welcoming also the successful conclusion of the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), held from 17 to 20 October 2016 in Quito,

Recalling its resolution 71/238 of 21 December 2016 on the follow-up to the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries,

Recalling also Economic and Social Council resolution 2017/28 of 25 July 2017 on the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020,

Recalling further its resolution 67/221 of 21 December 2012 on the smooth transition for countries graduating from the list of least developed countries,

Stressing the importance of inclusiveness within the United Nations development system and that no country and no one is left behind in the implementation of the present resolution,

1. *Takes note* of the reports of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020[5] and crisis mitigation and resilience-building for the least developed countries[6] as well as the report of the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, entitled "State of the Least Developed Countries, 2017";[7]

2. *Calls upon* the least developed countries, their development partners, the United Nations system and all other actors to further strengthen the global partnership for development for the least developed countries in all priority areas of the Istanbul Programme of Action[2] in order to ensure the timely, effective and full

[3] See FCCC/CP/2015/10/Add.1, decision 1/CP.21, annex.
[4] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1771, No. 30822.
[5] A/72/83-E/2017/60.
[6] A/72/270.
[7] Available from: unohrlls.org/custom-content/uploads/2017/07/State-of-the-LDCs_2017.pdf.

implementation of the Programme of Action during the remainder of the decade, in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,[8] the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development,[9] which is an integral part of the 2030 Agenda, supports and complements it and helps to contextualize its means of implementation targets with concrete policies and actions, the Paris Agreement adopted under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change,[3] the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030[10] and the New Urban Agenda;[11]

3. *Invites* the private sector, civil society and foundations to contribute to the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action in their respective areas of competence, in line with the national priorities of the least developed countries;

4. *Recalls* the decision contained in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development that effective linkages will be made with the follow-up and review arrangements of all relevant United Nations conferences and processes, including on the least developed countries, underlines the importance of strong synergy in the implementation of the recently adopted agendas and the Istanbul Programme of Action at all levels, and encourages coordination and coherence in the follow-up of their implementation;

5. *Notes with appreciation* that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda incorporate a number of key development challenges and priorities for the least developed countries;

6. *Reaffirms* that the least developed countries, as the most vulnerable group of countries, need enhanced global support to overcome the structural challenges they face in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and in this regard calls upon the international community to prioritize and strengthen support from all sources to facilitate the coordinated implementation and coherent follow-up to and monitoring of the Istanbul Programme of Action, the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda in the least developed countries;

7. *Expresses* its deep concern that total official development assistance (ODA) from the countries of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development to least developed countries declined in nominal terms from $41 billion in 2014 to $37.3 billion in 2015 and that the preliminary data for 2016 show that bilateral net ODA to least developed countries further decreased by 3.9 per cent in real terms compared to 2015,[12] and reiterates that the fulfilment of all ODA commitments remains crucial and that ODA providers reaffirm their respective commitments, including the commitment by many developed countries to achieve the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national income for official development assistance (ODA/GNI) and 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of ODA/GNI to the least developed countries;

8. *Encouraged* by those few countries that have met or surpassed their commitment to 0.7 per cent of ODA/GNI and the target of 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of ODA/GNI to the least developed countries, urges all others to step up efforts to increase their ODA and to make additional concrete efforts towards the ODA targets, and encourages ODA providers to consider setting a target to provide at least 0.20 per cent of ODA/GNI to the least developed countries;

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[8] Resolution 70/1.
[9] Resolution 69/313, annex.
[10] Resolution 69/283, annex II.
[11] Resolution 71/256, annex.
[12] See A/72/83-E/2017/60.

9. *Appreciates and is encouraged* by those who are allocating at least 50 per cent of their ODA to the least developed countries;

10. *Invites* development partners to consider least developed country indicators, namely gross national income per capita, the human assets index and the economic vulnerability index, as part of their criteria for allocating official development assistance;

11. *Reiterates* that an important use of international public finance, including ODA, is to catalyse additional resource mobilization from other sources, public and private;

12. *Calls upon* the developing countries, guided by the spirit of solidarity and consistent with their capabilities, to provide support for the effective implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action in mutually agreed areas of cooperation within the framework of South-South cooperation, which is a complement to but not a substitute for North-South cooperation;

13. *Recognizes* the significant potential of regional economic integration and interconnectivity to promote inclusive growth and sustainable development in the least developed countries, and stresses the need to strengthen regional cooperation and regional trade agreements to improve connectivity and competitiveness, increase productivity, lower transaction costs and expand markets;

14. *Also recognizes* that the least developed countries face significant infrastructure gaps, including in the areas of transport, energy, and information and communications technology, and reaffirms the need to enhance infrastructure connectivity with concrete actions, maximizing synergies in infrastructure planning and development;

15. *Expresses its deep concern* that, in 2015, merchandise exports of the least developed countries contracted by 25 per cent, a significantly larger drop than in 2014, and further declined by 6 per cent in 2016, resulting in a considerable decline in their share of world merchandise exports, which stood at 0.94 per cent in 2016, and calls upon least developed countries and their development and trading partners to take the measures necessary to reverse this trend with a view to doubling the least developed countries' share of global exports by 2020;[13]

16. *Urges* the least developed countries and their development partners to make use of existing initiatives and programmes, such as the relevant ministerial decisions of the World Trade Organization on duty-free and quota-free market access for the least developed countries and on preferential rules of origin for those countries, as well as aid for trade, reiterates its commitment to increase aid-for-trade support, in particular for the least developed countries, and strives to allocate an increasing proportion of aid for trade to the least developed countries, provided according to development cooperation effectiveness principles, welcomes additional cooperation among developing countries to this end, encourages the least developed countries to mainstream trade in their national development plans, with this in mind welcomes the extension of the Enhanced Integrated Framework for Trade-related Technical Assistance to Least Developed Countries into phase two and, as the Enhanced Integrated Framework implements the reforms agreed as necessary for its continuation, urges members to contribute to the timely replenishment of the Enhanced Integrated Framework Trust Fund, for the effective implementation, without any disruption, of the Framework between 2016 and 2022;

17. *Expresses its concern* that, despite various international efforts such as the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative and the Multilateral Debt Relief

[13] See resolution 70/1.

Initiative, many least developed countries still struggle with a high debt burden, and, in the least developed countries, debt stocks registered an average yearly growth rate of 6.4 per cent in the period 2009-2016, the debt-to-exports ratio increased from 81 per cent in 2011 to 136 per cent in 2016,[14] and debt service takes up a large part of their scarce budgetary resources, representing an obstacle for economic growth, poverty eradication and the achievement of internationally agreed development goals, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

18. *Stresses* the need for the international community to remain vigilant in monitoring the debt situation of the least developed countries and to continue to take effective measures, preferably within existing frameworks, when applicable, to address the debt problem of those countries, including through coordinated policies aimed at fostering debt financing, debt relief, debt restructuring and sound debt management, as appropriate, for the multilateral and bilateral debt owed by the least developed countries to creditors, both public and private, reiterates its commitment to work through existing initiatives, such as the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative, and reaffirms the importance of transparency in debt management;

19. *Recognizes* the significant potential of multilateral development banks and other international development banks in financing sustainable development and providing know-how to the least developed countries;

20. *Expresses its deep concern* that the foreign direct investment flows to least developed countries contracted by 13 per cent to $38 billion in 2016 compared to the previous year, with continued concentration on extractive and related industries, and underlines the need to take the measures necessary at all levels to reverse this trend and further accelerate foreign direct investment in least developed countries to meet their growing needs, to realize the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

21. *Invites* the Secretary-General, in his capacity as the Chair of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, to retain the issue of investment promotion regimes for the least developed countries in the agenda of the Board, with a view to enhancing the overall effectiveness of United Nations system support to increase the flow of foreign direct investment to the least developed countries and the ability of those countries to attract and benefit from such investment, and takes note of the United Nations system's coordinated efforts in this regard;[15]

22. *Recognizes* that significant additional domestic public resources, including at the subnational level, supplemented by international assistance as appropriate, will be critical to realizing sustainable development and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, and that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda acknowledge the centrality of domestic resource mobilization underscored by the principle of national ownership;

23. *Also recognizes* that, while the least developed countries have made considerable efforts to mobilize domestic resources and attract private investment, further progress is needed;

24. *Further recognizes* that private business activity, investment and innovation are major drivers of productivity, inclusive economic growth and job creation, and that private international capital flows, in particular foreign direct investment, along with a stable international financial system, are vital complements to national development efforts;

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[14] A/72/253.

[15] See CEB/2017/4, para. 44.

25. *Encourages* the least developed countries, in accordance with their national plans and priorities and with the full support of their development partners, to develop their capacities to track financial transactions, administer taxation, regulate customs and redouble efforts to substantially reduce illicit financial flows by 2030, with a view to eventually eliminating them, including by combating tax evasion and corruption through strengthened national regulation, and also encourages the United Nations and other relevant international bodies to help to support these efforts, in accordance with their respective mandates;

26. *Expresses its deep concern* that, owing to significant capacity constraints, the least developed countries are disproportionately affected by the adverse impacts of climate change, including persistent drought and extreme weather events, sea-level rise, coastal erosion, salinity intrusion, glacier lake outburst floods, ocean acidification and the rise in frequency, as well as the impact, of natural and man-made disasters, which further threaten food security and efforts to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development, and expresses its concern that women and girls are often disproportionately affected by the impacts of climate change and other environmental issues;

27. *Welcomes* the Paris Agreement, adopted under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and its early entry into force, encourages all its parties to fully implement the Agreement, and parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change that have not yet done so to deposit their instruments of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession, where appropriate, as soon as possible, recognizes the synergies between the implementation of the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, acknowledges the importance of continued support for and international cooperation on adaptation and mitigation efforts and on strengthening resilience, stresses the necessity of adequate and predictable financial resources from a variety of sources, including public and private ones, and highlights the specific needs and special circumstances of developing countries, especially those that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change, including the least developed countries;

28. *Urges* the United Nations to intensify support for States to fully implement the New Urban Agenda, adopted in Quito in 2016, considering the particular attention to be given to addressing the unique and emerging urban development challenges;

29. *Underlines* the need to reduce the vulnerability of the least developed countries to economic, natural and environmental shocks and disasters, as well as climate change, and to enhance their ability to meet these and other challenges by strengthening their resilience, and in this regard stresses that it is important that all countries and other actors work together to further develop and implement concrete measures on an urgent basis at the national and international levels so as to build the resilience of the least developed countries to withstand economic shocks and mitigate their adverse effects, to withstand and overcome the adverse effects of climate change, to enhance sustainable growth and protect biodiversity and to withstand natural hazards in order to reduce the risk of disasters, as agreed upon in the Istanbul Programme of Action;

30. *Takes note with appreciation* of the findings and recommendations of the report of the Secretary-General on crisis mitigation and resilience-building for least developed countries,[6] notes that the multilateral risk reduction strategies and mechanisms have proven insufficient for least developed countries, as some of them are often inadequately funded, call for cumbersome administrative procedures and regulatory reforms and require complex and technical proposals to access various

funds, and in this regard, in order to address these issues, decides to establish a comprehensive multi-stakeholder resilience-building mechanism for least developed countries by leveraging the existing measures and initiatives, which would entail a number of measures to be established or revitalized at the national, regional and global levels to respond to various types of disasters and shocks as elaborated in the report of the Secretary-General;

31. *Congratulates* those countries that have graduated from least developed country status, notes with appreciation that several least developed countries have expressed their intention to reach the status of graduation by 2020, invites them to start the preparations for their graduation and transition strategy, and requests all relevant organizations of the United Nations system, led by the Office of the High Representative, to extend necessary support in this regard, in a coordinated manner;

32. *Reiterates its recommendation* that the consultative mechanism specified in its resolution 59/209 of 20 December 2004 be established by the graduating country, in cooperation with its bilateral and multilateral development and trading partners, to facilitate the preparation of the transition strategy and the identification of the associated actions and the negotiation of their duration and phasing-out for a period appropriate to the development situation of the country, and that it be integrated into other relevant consultative processes and initiatives between the graduating country and its development partners;

33. *Invites* development partners to make available timely information about country-specific support measures and related smooth transition measures for the least developed countries in the areas of financial support, technical assistance and trade-related measures, including their time frames, characteristics and modalities;

34. *Acknowledges* that the graduation of a country symbolizes its considerable long-term socioeconomic progress, prevailing over the structural handicaps to socioeconomic development, and also presents many challenges in the form of losing the package of least developed country-specific benefits and waivers from compliance with international obligations and commitments, and notes with concern that, in most cases, the graduated countries still remain far below the benchmarks under most of the Sustainable Development Goal indicators and continue to face significant challenges and vulnerabilities to various shocks and crises;

35. *Requests* the Secretary-General to elaborate in his report to the General Assembly on the implementation, effectiveness and added value of smooth transition measures, as requested in resolution 70/216, on a package of benefits from development partners that the countries graduated from the least developed country category will continue to enjoy in critical areas of their economy for a period of time consistent with their development situations and needs, as a safeguard measure to sustain them on their development path and prevent a relapse into the category of least developed countries, thereby facilitating their achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030;

36. *Welcomes* the establishment and operationalization of the Technology Bank for the Least Developed Countries, takes note with appreciation of the contributions that the Government of Turkey has made and of the pledges that least developed countries and other countries have made, calls upon other development partners, and the private sector and foundations, to make substantial voluntary contributions to ensure the successful commencement of the Bank's activities and its effective functioning in the long run, and requests the Secretary-General to continue his efforts to support the Bank, especially in its start-up phase;

37. *Recognizes* that furthering participation, empowering civil society, youth and women and strengthening collective action will contribute to the eradication of poverty and the achievement of sustainable development;

38. *Reiterates* that more effective representation of the least developed countries in decision-making at the global level could improve the international environment for the development of the least developed countries, and also reiterates that the international economic system and architecture should be inclusive and responsive to the special development needs of the least developed countries, ensuring their effective participation, voice and representation at all levels;

39. *Recognizes* that the activities relating to the least developed countries carried out within the Secretariat need to be further coordinated and consolidated in order to ensure the effective monitoring and follow-up of the Istanbul Programme of Action, led by the Office of the High Representative, and to provide well-coordinated support to realizing the goal of enabling half of the least developed countries to meet the criteria for graduation by 2020;

40. *Takes note* of the work of the Inter-Agency Consultative Group for the least developed countries, led by the Office of the High Representative, notes the steps taken by the Chief Executives Board for Coordination and the High-level Committee on Programmes in supporting the coordination and follow-up of the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action on a system-wide basis, and reiterates its invitation to the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chair of the Chief Executives Board, to include the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action in the agenda of the Board;

41. *Underlines* the need to give particular attention to the issues and concerns of the least developed countries in all major United Nations conferences and processes;

42. *Reiterates its request* to the Secretary-General to include, as appropriate, the issues of concern to the least developed countries in all relevant reports in the economic, social, environmental and related fields, in order to support the implementation of the goals set out in the Istanbul Programme of Action;

43. *Strongly encourages* Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, major groups and other donors to contribute in a timely manner to the Trust Fund in Support of Activities Undertaken by the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States to support the implementation, follow-up and monitoring of the Istanbul Programme of Action and the participation of the representatives from the least developed countries and recently graduated countries in the high-level political forum on sustainable development of the Economic and Social Council as well as in other relevant forums, and in this regard expresses its appreciation to those countries that have made voluntary contributions to the Trust Fund;

44. *Calls upon* the relevant organizations of the United Nations system, within their respective mandates and resources, to ensure that no country and no one is left behind in the implementation of the present resolution;

45. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its seventy-third session a report on the implementation of the present resolution and the Istanbul Programme of Action, and decides to include in the provisional agenda of its seventy-third session, under the item entitled "Groups of countries in special situations", the sub-item entitled "Follow-up to the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries".